



STORMWATER

Management in Westford

Frequently Asked Questions

1. When will the Bylaws take effect?

Bylaws will be presented for adoption at the 2008 Spring Town Meeting and will take effect once approved by the Attorney General's office.

2. How will the Bylaws be implemented?

The Planning Board will adopt and periodically amend regulations to administer the Stormwater Management Bylaw. A Stormwater Management Permit will require preparation of a Stormwater Management Plan, an Erosion and Sedimentation Control Plan, and an O&M Plan. The Board of Health will enforce the Discharges to the Municipal Storm Drain System bylaw, and no permit is associated with it.

3. Will I need a Stormwater Management Permit for construction of a single family home?

Maybe. You will need a Stormwater Management Permit if the land disturbance is one acre or more. When in doubt, contact the Planning Board.

4. Can I improve my property without a Stormwater Management Permit?

Yes. You can build a deck or patio, add a garden, repave your driveway, maintain your lawn, or other similar activity that does not disturb one acre or more and does not cause an illicit discharge to the municipal storm drain system.

5. Do I have to hire a professional to obtain a Stormwater Management Permit?

Yes. A professional engineer must certify that the stormwater management measures are designed to meet regulations. It is likely that, if your project will disturb one acre or more, you will employ a design professional for many aspects of your project.

6. Is my sump pump discharge illegal?

Not necessarily. A sump pump may discharge uncontaminated groundwater. A sump pump may not be connected to the sanitary sewer system.

Town Meeting

Additional information, including the proposed Stormwater Management Bylaw, and the proposed Discharges to the Municipal Storm Drain System Bylaw, is available on the stormwater management Web site.

The two bylaws will be presented for adoption during the 2008 Spring Town Meeting. We look forward to seeing you there!

Contact us

Town of Westford, MA
Stormwater Management Program
28 North Street
Westford, MA 01886
Main phone: 978.692.5520
Fax: 978.399.2732

On the Web

http://www.westfordma.gov/pages/government/towndepartments/WestfordMA_engdept/stormwater

Proposed new Stormwater Management and Discharge Bylaws will help preserve Westford's local character and protect the environment.

Brochure prepared by Woodard & Curran. Photo credits: Outfall: Westford, MA; Westford River: Brian Sawyer, "Reflections of Fall", Blogging Westford, Blogspot.com.



Land development and land use conversion projects often transform the natural landscape from forests and fields into areas of impervious cover. Impervious areas are hard surfaces such as rooftops, driveways, streets, and parking lots. These changes can permanently alter the natural cycling of water and increase stormwater runoff and the potential for sand, oil and other pollution to flow to rivers, streams and lakes.

Increased runoff often increases flooding, stream channel erosion, and sediment transport, and decreases groundwater recharge.

The impacts of construction site and post-development stormwater runoff can adversely affect public safety, public and private property, surface water, drinking water supplies, groundwater resources, recreation, aquatic habitats, and other uses of lands and waters.

Many of these negative effects can be controlled through careful site planning and applying structural and nonstructural stormwater Best Management Practices (BMPs).



Sediment discharged to storm drains due to poorly maintained BMPs, from the U.S. EPA.

CLEAN WATER, TODAY AND TOMORROW

Illicit discharges and illegal dumping into the storm drain system can lead to pollution flowing directly to the rivers, streams and lakes in and around Westford. A bylaw to clearly make such activities illegal will give the Town a tool to ensure that pollution does not enter the storm drain system, promoting cleaner waters and land now and in the future.

Why do we need new bylaws?

EPA requires Westford and hundreds of other communities in Massachusetts to adopt bylaws that address the impacts of illicit discharges and illegal dumping, construction site runoff, post-development runoff, and nonpoint source pollution by Spring 2008.

The Town of Westford has developed a Stormwater Management Bylaw to provide reasonable control of stormwater runoff quantity and quality to protect local water resources from degradation. A second bylaw regulating discharges to the municipal storm drain system will provide additional protection by prohibiting connections that could introduce pollutants into Westford's water bodies and drinking water supply.

What will the new Stormwater Management Bylaw do?

The Stormwater Management Bylaw will regulate post-construction stormwater runoff for both new and re-development projects, and erosion and sediment control and stormwater runoff for construction sites. This Bylaw will minimize damage to public and private property and infrastructure, safeguard public health and safety, and protect water and aquatic resources and the environment.



Direct discharge from a straight pipe, Center for Watershed Protection.

What will the new Discharges to the Municipal Storm Drain System Bylaw do?

The Bylaw governing discharges will allow the Town to eliminate and prevent pollution from entering the Town's storm sewer system. It will give the Town a tool to protect the health and safety of the residents, and promote cleaner water for drinking, recreation, and the aesthetic value it adds to the community.

Who will need a Stormwater Management Permit?

The following activities will require a Stormwater Management Permit from the Planning Board:

1. Any subdivision requiring a Definitive Plan;
2. Any activity that results in a land disturbance of one acre or more within the Town of Westford. A land disturbance means any action that causes vegetation clearing; or a change in the position, location, or arrangement of soil, sand, rock, gravel or similar earth material; and
3. Any activity that results in a land disturbance less than one acre if the project is part of a larger common plan of development that eventually will disturb one acre or more within the Town of Westford. This includes ANR lots.

Exemptions, such as maintenance of existing landscaping, are described in the Bylaw.